



Disaster-related injuries in the period of recovery: The effect of prolonged displacement on risk of injury in older adults

Author(s): Uscher-Pines L, Vernick JS, Curriero F, Lieberman R, Burke TA
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Abstract:

BACKGROUND: Hurricane Katrina, which struck the Gulf Coast of the United States in August 2005, initially displaced over a million people from their primary place of residence. Displaced older adults subsequently faced challenges, such as new or inferior living conditions, which could increase vulnerability to serious or life-threatening injuries such as hip fracture. The aim of this study was to determine whether Katrina victims who were displaced for a prolonged period of time were more likely to experience injuries than nondisplaced victims. **METHODS:** We tracked injury outcomes including fractures, sprains or strains, and lacerations in a cohort of 25,019 older adults (age >65 years) enrolled in a Medicare-Advantage Plan, for 1 year after Katrina. We used medical claims to obtain injury outcomes and analyzed propensity-score adjusted predictors of injury, including displacement status at 12 months. **RESULTS:** In our sample, 7,030 (28%) older adults were displaced at 12-month post-Katrina. Displaced victims had 1.53 (95% CI: 1.10-2.13) greater odds of sustaining a hip fracture in the year after the storm and 1.24 (95% CI: 1.07-1.44) greater odds of sustaining other fractures after adjusting for other risk factors. There was no significant association between displacement status at 12 months and sprains or strains or lacerations. **CONCLUSIONS:** Prolonged displacement is associated with increased risk of fracture in older adults. Emergency planners should screen temporary housing for injury hazards, and clinicians should regard displaced older adults as a vulnerable population in need of interventions such as risk communication messaging.

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Resource Description

Communication:

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change; surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

Communication Audience:

audience to whom the resource is directed

Public



Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

Exposure :

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Extreme Weather Event, Human Conflict/Displacement

Extreme Weather Event: Hurricanes/Cyclones

Geographic Feature:

resource focuses on specific type of geography

Ocean/Coastal

Geographic Location:

resource focuses on specific location

United States

Health Impact:

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Injury

Intervention:

strategy to prepare for or reduce the impact of climate change on health

A focus of content

Medical Community Engagement:

resource focus on how the medical community discusses or acts to address health impacts of climate change

A focus of content

Mitigation/Adaptation:

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

Population of Concern: A focus of content

Population of Concern:

populations at particular risk or vulnerability to climate change impacts

Elderly, Low Socioeconomic Status, Racial/Ethnic Subgroup

Other Racial/Ethnic Subgroup: African American

Resource Type:

format or standard characteristic of resource

Research Article

Timescale:



time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified

Vulnerability/Impact Assessment:

resource focus on process of identifying, quantifying, and prioritizing vulnerabilities in a system

A focus of content